



Safeguarding Children

1.4 Confidentiality and client access to records

Policy statement

Definition: *'Confidential information is information of some sensitivity, which is not already lawfully in the public domain or readily available from another public source, and which has been shared in a relationship where the person giving the information understood it would not be shared with others.'* (Information Sharing: Practitioners' Guide)

At The Bumblebee Children's Charity, all staff can be said to have a 'confidential relationship' with families. It is our intention to respect the privacy of children and their parents and carers, while ensuring that they access high quality early years' care and. We aim to ensure that all parents and carers can share their information in the confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children. There are record keeping systems in place that meet legal requirements; means of storing and sharing that information take place within the framework of the Data Protection Act and the Human Rights Act.

Confidentiality procedures

- We regard all information they share with us to be regarded as confidential. Some parents sometimes share information about themselves with other parents as well as staff; The Bumblebee Children's Charity cannot be held responsible if information is shared beyond those parents whom the person has 'confided' in.
- Information shared between parents in a discussion or training group is usually bound by a shared agreement that the information is confidential to the group and not discussed outside of it.
- We inform parents when we need to record confidential information beyond the general personal information we keep (see our record keeping procedures 5.1) - for example with regard to any injuries, concerns or changes in relation to the child or the family, any discussions with parents on sensitive matters, any records we are obliged to keep regarding action taken in respect of child protection and any contact and correspondence with external agencies in relation to their child.

- We keep all records securely (see our record keeping procedures 5.1).
- Parents are invited to talk in privacy in the centre office if they wish.

Client access to records procedures

Parents may request access to any confidential records held on their child and family following the procedure below:

- Any request to see the child's confidential file by a parent or person with parental responsibility must be made in writing to The Bumblebee Children's Charity Principal.
- The Bumblebee Children's Charity Principal informs the chairperson of the management committee and sends a written acknowledgement.
- The Bumblebee Children's Charity commits to providing access within 14 days, although this may be extended.
- The Bumblebee Children's Charity Principal and the nominated trustee prepare the file for viewing.
- All third parties are written to, stating that a request for disclosure has been received and asking for their permission to disclose to the person requesting it. Copies of these letters are retained on file electronically.
- 'Third parties' include all family members who may be referred to in the records.
- It also includes workers from any other agency, including social services, the health authority, etc. It is usual for agencies to refuse consent to disclose, preferring the individual to go directly to them.
- When all the consents/refusals to disclose have been received these are attached to the copy of the request letter.
- A second file will be prepared electronically, The Bumblebee Children's Charity Principal and the nominated trustee will go through the file and remove any information which a third party has refused consent to disclose.
- What remains is the information recorded by The Bumblebee Children's Charity, detailing the work initiated and followed by them in relation to confidential matters. This is called the 'clean copy'.
- The 'clean copy' is printed for the parents who are then invited in to discuss the contents. The file should never be given straight over, but should be gone through by The Bumblebee Children's Charity Principal, so that it can be explained.

- Legal advice may be sought before sharing a file, especially where the parent has possible grounds for litigation against The Bumblebee Children’s Charity or another (third party) agency.

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of The Bumblebee Children’s Charity, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please see also our policy on child protection.

Legal framework

- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998

This Policy was adopted by	
The Bumblebee Children’s Charity in	September 2015
Signed on behalf of the Trustees	September 2016
	September 2017
	September 2018
Name of signatory	
Role of signatory	